



Careers in Law and Legal Studies

Teacher Resources



Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center

925 W. Ottawa St.
P.O. Box 30205
Lansing, MI 48909
517-373-7171
web: courts.mi.gov/plc/

Contents

Introduction

Introduction	2
Grade Level & Curriculum Connections	2
Career Planning	2

Lesson Plans

Legal Careers Briefcase	3–4
Legal Careers Poetry	5–6
Careers in Law & Legal Studies (Graphic Organizer)	7
Becoming a Lawyer in Michigan	8–9
Legal Ethics	10–12
Simulations	13

Resources

Glossary of Selected Law-Related Careers	14–15
Dictionaries of Legal Terms	15
Additional Resources for Researching Legal Careers	16–18

Introduction

Careers in the law capture the imagination of students and adults alike. But what exactly do professionals in the legal system do? How does one become qualified for a law-related career?

This teacher resource complements tours offered at the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center. For more information about touring the Learning Center, visit <http://courts.mi.gov/plc> or call 517-373-7444.

Grade Level & Curriculum Connections

These resources are most appropriate for middle school students. However, the activities and information could be adapted for use by later elementary or by high school students. The enclosed materials are intended to help students fulfill Michigan's standards for Career and Employability, Social Studies, and English Language Arts.

Career Planning

Before beginning these exercises, students should be familiar with Career Pathways, methods of career planning, and self assessment.

Careers in law and legal studies category appear under the **Human Services Career Pathway**. Careers in this path are related to economic, political, and social systems. These include education, government, law and law enforcement, leisure and recreation, military, religion, child care, social services, and personal services.

Individuals who succeed in human services careers typically have the following traits:

- Friendly, open, and cooperative.
- Like to work with people to solve problems.
- Value doing something that makes things better for other people.

A poster of the six Career Pathways is available at the following web site:
www.michigan.gov/documents/pathways_8310_7.html.



Legal Careers Briefcase

A briefcase gains its name from its original use—lawyers carrying legal briefs to and from court. A brief is a legal document containing all the facts and points of law pertinent to a specific case, filed by a lawyer before arguing the case in court.



Time Required

2–3 class periods.

Objectives

Students will:

- Collect information from multiple sources about various careers in law and legal studies. (CES 3:2, CES 2:1, R.CM.06–8.04, SOC.V.2.MS.2, SOC.V.2.MS.3)
- Transform ideas and requirements into a product. (CES 3:3)
- Present their findings to the class. (CES 3:6, S.CN.08.01, S.CN.06–08.03, S.DS.06–08.04, L.CN.06–08.02)

Instructional Resources

Cereal boxes
Craft paper or grocery bags
Tape
Brass fasteners
Glue sticks
Craft foam, cut in 1" x 8" strips

Careers resources
Legal Careers graphic organizer
Markers, crayons, colored pencils
Magazine photos, clip art, etc.
Scissors

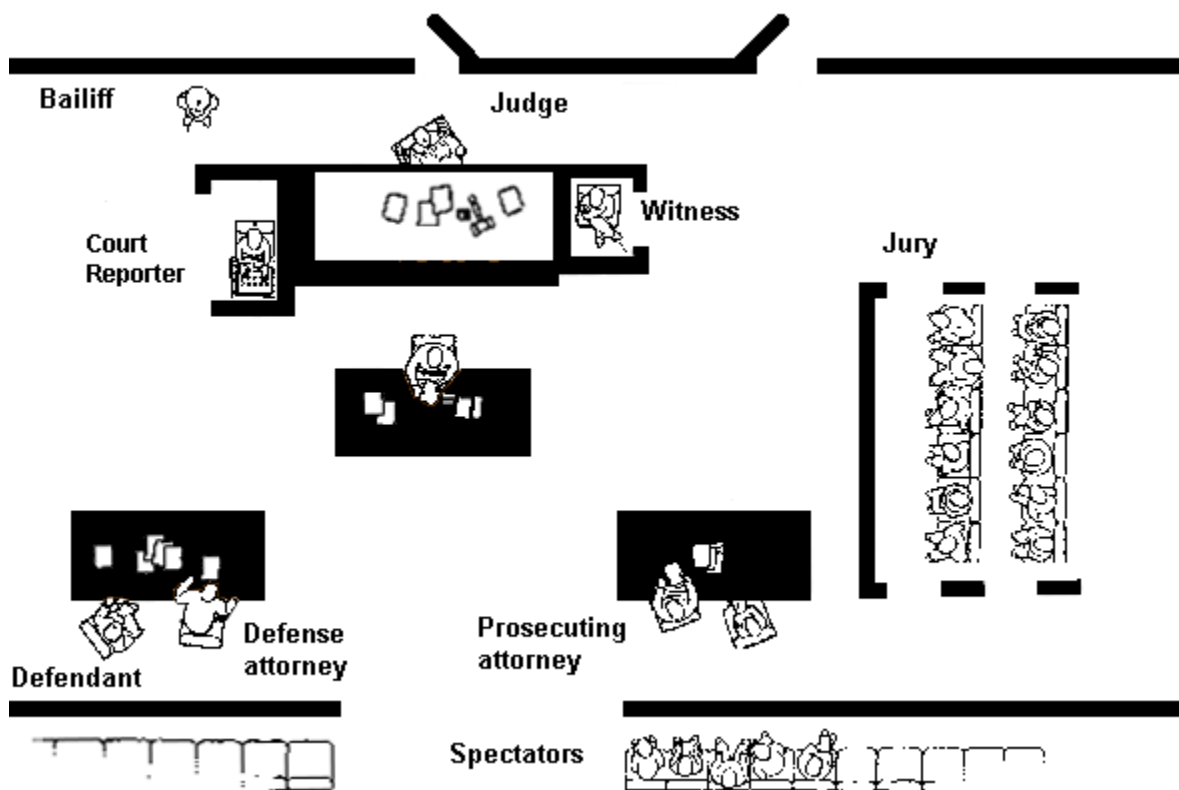
Sequence of Activities

1. Develop a list of law-related careers for students to research. (See Glossary of Selected Law-Related Careers for suggestions).
2. Prepare the briefcases.
 - Wrap empty cereal boxes with brown paper, leaving one end open on each box.
 - Fasten a strip of craft foam to one side of each box with brass fasteners, forming a handle.
 - Seal each box.
3. Divide the class into groups of twos or threes. Assign a career for each group to research and distribute the Legal Careers graphic organizer. (See also Additional Resources for Researching Legal Careers.)

4. After the students have completed their initial research, they should transfer the information to the briefcase, using words, pictures, and/or drawings.
5. Each group will prepare and make a presentation for the class about the career. Presentations may include poetry. (See Legal Careers Poetry.)

Presentation Idea

To add interest to the presentations, set up the classroom like a courtroom and position each group in the location that corresponds with their career. Not all legal professionals have permanent positions in a courtroom, so any remaining students could make their presentations from the spectators' area.



Legal Careers Poetry

This activity may be completed in conjunction with the Legal Careers Briefcase activity.

Time Required

1–2 class periods

Objectives

Students will:

- Collect information from multiple sources. (CES 3:2, CES 2:1, R.CM.06–8.04, SOC.V.2.MS.2, SOC.V.2.MS.3)
- Transform ideas and requirements into a product. (CES 3:3)
- Write poetry. (W.GN.06–08.01)
- Present their poetry to the class. (CES 3:6, S.CN.08.01, S.CN.06–08.03, S.DS.06–08.04, L.CN.06–08.02)

Instructional Resources

Careers resources

Legal Careers graphic organizer

Legal Careers Poetry handout

Paper

Pen or pencils

Directions

1. Develop a list of law-related careers for students to research. (See Glossary of Selected Law-Related Careers for suggestions.)
2. Divide the class into groups of twos or threes. Assign a career for each group to research and distribute the Legal Careers graphic organizer to focus the research. (See Additional Resources for Researching Legal Careers.)
3. Have students create and present poems about their career. The Legal Careers Poetry handout includes examples of a variety of poetry forms.

Legal Careers Poetry

Students interested in careers in law and legal studies wrote the example poems.

Form	Example
Cinquain Line 1: 1-word title (usually a noun) Line 2: 2-word description (often two adjectives) Line 3: 3 words expressing action Line 4: 4-word phrase Line 5: 1-word synonym for the topic	Defense Practicing law Reading, Writing, Listening Protecting those in need Attorney
Diamanté Line 1: 1 noun Line 2: 2 adjectives Line 3: 3 participles (verbs end in "ing") Line 4: 4 related nouns Line 5: 3 participles Line 6: 2 adjectives Line 7: 1 noun (synonym)	Justice Thoughtful, Scholarly Reviewing, Asking, Writing Application, Brief, Arguments, Opinion Interpreting, Overseeing, Rule-making Supreme, Elected Judge
Limerick Line 1: 8 syllables (rhyme of A) Line 2: 8 syllables (rhyme of A) Line 3: 6 syllables (rhyme of B) Line 4: 6 syllables (rhyme of B) Line 5: 8 syllables (rhyme of A)	There was a Supreme Court Justice Who read the law as it "just is" The lawyers before her, They sometimes implored her. Said she, "Law just says what it is."
Acrostic The first letter of each line forms the name of the job title.	Prosecutor Responsible Office Smart Every criminal's nightmare Court Upholding the law Tough Organized Receptive
Couplet Two-lines: each line has the same meter and their endings rhyme with one another.	Formal training is what we get For the life in Government.
Haiku Line 1: 5 syllables Line 2: 7 syllables Line 3: 5 syllables	It's quiet in the court The bailiff has entered now The judge will come soon
Tanka Line 1: 5 syllables Line 2: 7 syllables Line 3: 5 syllables Line 4: 7 syllables Line 5: 7 syllables, rhymes with line 4	Judicial workers General trial court judge For the greater good The best 6 years happen then Do it all over again

Careers in Law & Legal Studies

Job Title

Duties

Special Skills

Education, Training, Experience, & Other Requirements

How to Get the Job

- ☐ Job application
- ☐ Appointment by an official
- ☐ Election

Explanation:

Work Location(s)

Professional Associations

Salary Range

Human Services Career Pathway



Becoming a Lawyer in Michigan

Becoming a lawyer is a step-by-step process. Read the steps and write in the order, numbering the steps, 1 through 6.

- _____ Attend law school to earn a J.D. (*juris doctorate*) degree. Law school is a three-year program.
- _____ Pay dues to become a member of the State Bar of Michigan.
- _____ Pass the Michigan bar exam. Receive “character and fitness” certification by the State Board of Law Examiners, determining that you are a trustworthy person.
- _____ Earn a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university. You may study any major.
- _____ Be admitted to the bar by the Michigan Supreme Court and take the lawyer’s oath.
- _____ Graduate from high school.

It takes hard work and dedication to complete all the steps in becoming a lawyer. If you graduate from high school at age 18, approximately how old will you be if you complete these steps in the minimum amount of time? Place these three steps: *graduate from high school, earn a bachelor’s degree, finish law school/pass the bar* on the time line.

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Additional Resources on Becoming a Lawyer

Admission Process Overview, State Bar of Michigan
<http://www.michbar.org/professional/admissionprocess.cfm>

Introduction to Law School, Thomas M. Cooley Law School
<http://introlaw.cooley.edu/welcome1.html>

Official Guide, Law School Admission Council
<http://officialguide.lsac.org/docs/cgi-bin/general.asp>

Becoming a Lawyer in Michigan (Answer Key)

Becoming a lawyer is a step-by-step process. Read the steps and write in the order, numbering them, 1-6.

- 3 ____ Attend law school to earn a J.D. (*juris doctorate*) degree. Law school is a three-year program.
- 6 ____ Pay dues to become a member of the State Bar of Michigan.
- 4 ____ Pass the Michigan bar exam. Receive “character and fitness” certification by the State Board of Law Examiners, determining that you are a trustworthy person.
- 2 ____ Earn a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university. You may choose any major.
- 5 ____ Be admitted to the bar by the Michigan Supreme Court and take the lawyer’s oath.
- 1 ____ Graduate from high school.

It takes hard work and dedication to complete all the steps in becoming a lawyer. If you graduate from high school at age 18, approximately how old will you be if you complete these steps in the minimum amount of time? Place these three steps: *graduate from high school, earn a bachelor’s degree, finish law school/pass the bar* on the time line.



Additional Resources on Becoming a Lawyer

Admission Process Overview, State Bar of Michigan
<http://www.michbar.org/professional/admissionprocess.cfm>

Introduction to Law School, Thomas M. Cooley Law School
<http://introlaw.cooley.edu/welcome1.html>

Official Guide, Law School Admission Council
<http://officialguide.lsac.org/docs/cgi-bin/general.asp>

Legal Ethics

Those involved in the legal system place great importance on professional ethics. All lawyers in Michigan must receive “character and fitness” certification from the State Board of Law Examiners, and bodies such as the Attorney Grievance Board, Attorney Discipline Commission, and Judicial Tenure Commission exist to ensure ethical behavior by attorneys, judges, magistrates, and referees.

Time Required

1–2 class periods.

Objectives

Students will:

- Explain the meaning of ethics, and have a working understanding of the word.
- Recognize areas that require ethical behavior by lawyers.
- Write a new Lawyers Oath, based upon the oath taken by all lawyers in Michigan. (R.CM.06–08.01, R.CM.06–08.02, R.CM.06–08.03, R.CM.06–08.04, W.PS.06–08.01, W.R.06–08.01)

Instructional Resources

Legal Ethics handout

Paper and pencils/pens

Dictionary

White board, chalkboard, or overhead

Sequence of Activities

1. Divide the class into groups of twos or threes. Have each group develop a definition for the word “ethics.” Discuss the definitions and come to a consensus on the meaning of the word. Talk about why legal ethics are important to our system of justice and introduce some of the bodies that oversee professional and judicial ethics. (See Additional Resources: Legal Ethics).
2. Distribute the Legal Ethics handout and assign one paragraph per group for discussion and rewriting. Because some of the language is difficult, students should discuss the meaning of the paragraph and then discuss the importance of the ideas it contains. Next, have each group rewrite the paragraph, adding or subtracting ideas based upon their understanding of careers in law and legal studies in the 21st century.
3. Create a new Lawyers Oath by discussing each group’s paragraph and then writing it on the board. Groups may also offer ideas for additional lines, as they think appropriate. When the class is satisfied with the results, administer the oath to the class. Discuss why it is important for lawyers to say the words aloud in public.

Extension Activities

1. Invite a lawyer or judge to speak to the class and ask him/her to discuss the importance of professional ethics and his/her remembrance of taking the Lawyers Oath. The expert may also be willing to administer the oath to the class.
2. Study the importance of good character and honesty in everyday life. A series of lessons and resources are available at the web site of the PBS television series *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*: http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/teachers/lp_dishonesty.html.

Additional Resources on Legal Ethics

Disciplinary Agencies/Authorities, State Bar of Michigan
<http://www.michbar.org/professional/disciplinary.cfm>

Ethics Opinions, State Bar of Michigan
<http://www.michbar.org/opinions/ethicsopinions.cfm>

Lawyers Oath, State Bar of Michigan
<http://www.michbar.org/generalinfo/lawyersoath.cfm>

Michigan Court Rules and Other Rules, Michigan Supreme Court
<http://courtofappeals.mijud.net/rules/>

Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination, National Conference of Bar Examiners
<http://www.ncbex.org/multistate-tests/mpre/>

Oath of Public Officers, Michigan Constitution, Article XI, Section 1
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/> (Constitution Search)

It is reasonable that everyone who asks justice should do justice . . .
— Thomas Jefferson, letter to George Hammond, May 29, 1792

Legal Ethics

In the United States, the legal system is built upon justice, a core democratic value. To practice law in Michigan, every lawyer must take and honor the oath written below.

Lawyers Oath

I do solemnly swear (or affirm):

I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Michigan;

I will maintain the respect due to courts of justice and judicial officers;

I will not counsel or maintain any suit or proceeding which shall appear to me to be unjust, nor any defense except such as I believe to be honestly debatable under the law of the land;

I will employ for the purpose of maintaining the causes confided to me such means only as are consistent with truth and honor, and will never seek to mislead the judge or jury by any artifice or false statement of fact or law;

I will maintain the confidence and preserve inviolate the secrets of my client, and will accept no compensation in connection with my client's business except with my client's knowledge and approval;

I will abstain from all offensive personality, and advance no fact prejudicial to the honor or reputation of a party or witness, unless required by the justice of the cause with which I am charged;

I will never reject, from any consideration personal to myself, the cause of the defenseless or oppressed, or delay any cause for lucre or malice;

I will in all other respects conduct myself personally and professionally in conformity with the high standards of conduct imposed upon members of the bar as conditions for the privilege to practice law in this State.

Simulations

Simulations can be excellent ways to engage students in real-life situations that require higher-order thinking (HS – 6.2.10). In addition, many legal professionals trace the origin of their careers to an experience with mock trials or other simulations.

Resources for mock trials (simulations of jury trials where evidence is presented), moot court (simulations of appellate court arguments), and small claims court proceedings (simulations in which litigants represent themselves in matters involving less than \$3,000) are listed below.

Mock Trials

19th Judicial Circuit Court of Lake and McHenry Counties, Illinois

http://www.19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/bkshelf/resource/mt_conduct.htm

American Bar Association

<http://www.abanet.org/publiced/mocktrials.html#k6>

Constitutional Rights Foundation

<http://www.crfc.org/mocktrial.html>

Streetlaw

<http://www.streetlaw.org/content.asp?ContentId=181>

Moot Court

Putting on Mock Trials, American Bar Association (includes moot court exercises)

<http://www.abanet.org/abastore/index.cfm?section=Main&fm=Product.AddToCart&pid=2350206>

Landmark Cases

<http://www.landmarkcases.org/mootcourt.html>

Supreme Court Simulation, U.S. Courts

<http://www.uscourts.gov/outreach/resources/mootcourt05.pdf>

Small Claims Court Simulations

Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center

http://courts.michigan.gov/plc/curriculum/Small_Claims.pdf

Glossary of Selected Law-Related Careers

Attorney. See Lawyer.

Bailiff. A court officer in charge of prisoners during a trial; also responsible for guarding the jury and preserving order in the court.

Commissioner. Highly experienced lawyer who prepares reports about cases that may be heard by the Michigan Supreme Court.

Court Administrator. A court employee who directs the nonjudicial aspects of a court, such as personnel, budgeting, and jury management.

Court Clerk. A court employee who maintains a court's permanent records.

Court Crier. A court officer who opens sessions of a court. The opening speech typically begins with "Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye," or "Oyez, oyez, oyez."

Court Interpreter. A person who translates court proceedings for those who do not speak or understand English.

Court Reporter/Recorder. A certified professional who makes a word-for-word record of court proceedings using a computer or other recording device.

Friend of the Court Investigator. A court employee who enforces custody, parenting-time, and child support orders.

Judge. A public official, elected to administer law in a court of justice. A judge has the authority to make decisions in civil and criminal proceedings. To be qualified as a judge in Michigan, a person must be licensed to practice law in the state and have practiced law for at least 5 years. Michigan's trial court and Court of Appeals judges are elected to six-year terms.

Justice. A judge of a Supreme Court. Michigan's justices are elected to eight-year terms. See Judge for other qualifications.

Law Clerk. A law school student or graduate who assists a judge by conducting legal research, writing memos, and drafting opinions.

Law Librarian. A librarian who works in a law school, law firm, or government library, aiding lawyers and other legal researchers.

Lawyer. A professional who has earned a college degree plus a degree from an accredited law school. A lawyer must also pass a test, called a bar exam, and be certified by the State Bar of Michigan to practice within the state. Lawyers usually specialize in a particular area of the law. Some prosecute or defend those accused of crimes (criminal law). Others represent governments, businesses, or individuals in matters of civil law, such as contracts, wills, environmental law, torts or real estate transactions. A number of lawyers become judges. Still others use their legal training in fields such as education or business.

Legal Secretary. An assistant who helps a lawyer or judge by taking and transcribing dictation, screening callers, setting up appointments, and completing similar tasks.

Magistrate. In Michigan's state courts, a professional appointed by a district court judge who has the power to perform certain judicial duties. These include, holding informal hearings on civil infractions, issuing arrest and search warrants, and setting and collecting bonds.

Mediator. A professional trained to help people resolve their problems without going to court. Some mediators are lawyers.

Paralegal/Legal Assistant. Paralegals, also called legal assistants, assist lawyers. They interview clients, maintain client records, conduct legal research, and draft letters and legal documents.

Probation Officer. A professional who works directly with adults or juveniles who are currently on probation.

Psychologist. A professional who provides counseling and other treatment services.

Referee. A professional who conducts certain court proceedings at the Friend of the Court or the Juvenile Section of Family Court. Most referees are lawyers.

Dictionaries of Legal Terms

Findlaw.com Legal Dictionary
<http://dictionary.lp.findlaw.com/>

Garner, Bryan A. (ed.). *Black's Law Dictionary*, 8th ed. Eagan, MN: Thomson West, 2004.

Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center
<http://courts.michigan.gov/lc-gallery/day-in-court.htm>

Michigan Judicial Institute, Handbook of Legal Terms
<http://courts.michigan.gov/mji/resources/holt/holt.htm>

Additional Resources for Researching Legal Careers

Careers, General Information

Michigan Virtual Career Explorer (MOIS)

<http://www.mois.org/>

Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor

<http://stats.bls.gov/oco/>

America's Career InfoNet, U.S. Department of Labor (includes videos)

<http://www.acinet.org/acinet/>

New York Career Zone

<https://www.nycareerzone.org/>

Legal Careers, Internet

CareerLink: Courts

<http://whohascourtjobs.com/>

Careers in Law, StreetLaw

http://www.glencoe.com/sec/socialstudies/street_law/additional_resources/careers_in_law/

Careers in the Court System, Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center

<http://courts.michigan.gov/plc/misc/careers.pdf>

Job Descriptions, National Center for State Courts

http://www.ncsconline.org/D_KIS/jobdeda/main.htm

Law School and the Careers that Follow, State Bar of Michigan

<http://www.michbar.org/publications/pdfs/lawschool.pdf>

Legal Careers, American Bar Association

<http://www.abanet.org/publiced/legalcareers.pdf>

Legal Careers, Publications

Bell-Rehwoldt, Sheri. *Law. Careers for the Twenty-First Century*. Detroit: Thomson-Gale, 2005.

Camenson, Blythe. *Careers for Legal Eagles and Other Law-and-Order Types*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.

Michigan Court System

Court Security Officers Duties

http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/security/cs_appA.pdf

Job Description Summaries (Trial Courts)

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/SCAO/resources/publications/reports/hr/jobdesc.pdf>

Manual for Court Reporters and Recorders

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/crr.htm>

Manual for District Court Magistrates

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/crr.htm>

Manual for District Court Probation Officers

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/prbofc.htm>

Mediation, Michigan Court System

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/pamphlets/CourtADROnePage.pdf>

Mediation, Dispute Resolution Program

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/dispute/>

Michigan Court Administration Reference Guide

<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/carg.htm>

Michigan Court Interpreter Testing and Training

<http://courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/access/inter.htm>

Model Friend of the Court Handbook

http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/resources/publications/manuals/focb/focb_hbk.pdf

Professional Organizations

American Association of Law Libraries

<http://www.aallnet.org/>

American Bar Association

<http://www.abanet.org/>

American Probation and Parole Association

<http://www.appa-net.org/>

Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan

<http://www.mawebcenters.com/cdamsite/index.html>

Dispute Resolution Association of Michigan

<http://www.michiganresolution.org/>

Michigan Association of District Court Magistrates

<http://www.madcm.org/>

Michigan Association of Court Mediators

<http://macm.cc/>

Michigan District Judges Association

<http://www.mdja.org/>

Michigan Prosecuting Attorneys Council

<http://www.michiganprosecutor.org/>

Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network

<http://www.mitinweb.org/>

National Association of Legal Assistants

<http://www.nala.org/>

National Association of Court Management

<http://www.nacmnet.org/>

National Court Reporters Association

<http://www.ncraonline.org/>

Referees Association of Michigan

<http://referees-association.org/>

State Bar of Michigan

<http://www.michbar.org/>